SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
GRANT APPLICATION

Project Name: Alamos Canyon Acquisition	**Amount of Request:** $530,000.00 **Total Project Cost:** $2,952,626 **Matching Funds:** $2,422,126 **Lat/Long:** 34.292092, -118.810283
Applicant Name: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District	
Applicant Address: 1692 Sycamore Drive Simi Valley, CA 93065	**Project Address:** Hwy 118 at Alamos Cyn Rd

County	Senate District	Assembly District
Ventura	27 Pavley	37 Williams/ 38 Wilk

Phone: (805) 584-4400
Email: larry@rsrpd.us; robin@rsrpd.us

Tax ID: 95-2215284

Grantee's Authorized Representative:

Larry Peterson, District Manager
Name and Title

(805) 584-4400
Phone

Overhead Allocation Notice:

☑Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices.
☑The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses.
☑The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to or with the grant application.
Note: RSRPD is not requesting reimbursement for overhead costs.

All check boxes must be checked

Project Description:

Fee title acquisition of approximately 326 acres in Alamos Canyon. The property connects both sides of Highway 118, and provides a wildlife corridor which connects the Los Padres National Forest and the Santa Monica Mountains via a Caltrans easement. Alamos Canyon contains wetlands, riparian, coastal scrub, oak woodland, and grasslands. Preservation of this canyon will protect a key wildlife linkage. The Park District intends to provide public access for recreational activities such as hiking, non-motorized bicycling, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing. A more detailed project summary and map are attached.

*attach additional pages as necessary

Tasks / Milestones:	**Budget:**	**Completion Date**
Preliminary Title Reports, Appraisals, Negotiations & Escrow	$40,000	Appraisal and Purchase Docs Fall 2015; Title Report Fall 2016
DGS Appraisal Review Completed	$10,000	September 23, 2015
Escrow Fees, Title Insurance, Closing Costs, Signage	$10,500	January 2017
Acquisition Purchase	$2,892,126	January 2017

For Acquisition Projects: **APN(s):**

APN	Total Acres	Fee Acq
615-0-150-37	25.36	25.36
615-0-150-35	16.1	16.1
615-0-150-32 Portion	379	116.78
615-0-150-28	4	4
615-0-150-14	15.79	15.79
615-0-150-13	14.07	14.07
615-0-110-13 Portion	77.02	5.5
500-0-292-26	4.53	4.53
500-0-292-25	1.32	1.32
500-0-292-24	0.47	0.47
500-0-292-23	1.42	1.42
500-0-292-18	9.48	9.48
500-0-292-17 Portion	138.06	66.7
500-0-292-15	17.84	17.84
500-0-292-10	2.72	2.72
500-0-291-32	18.11	18.11
500-0-291-28	0.84	0.84
500-0-291-26	4.97	4.97
	734.08	**326**

Acreage: 326

I certify that the information contained in this Grant Application form, including required attachments, is accurate.

Signature of Authorized Representative

11/10/15
Date

Alamos Canyon Acquisition
Grant Application
Supplemental Information per Grant Guidelines

1) A detailed scope of work, including a list of specific tasks, a detailed budget, and a timeline for project implementation (including a completion date for each task);

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) are working together to preserve a total of 734 acres of Alamos Canyon containing riparian, coastal scrub, oak woodland, and grassland habitats. An important wildlife corridor linkage passes through the canyon. Preservation will be accomplished through the purchase in fee of approximately 326 acres (the subject of this grant request) and the future acquisition of a conservation easement over an additional approximately 408 acres from the current owner, Waste Management, Inc. All information in this grant request relates to the acquisition of the 326 acres in fee.

The cost of the land acquisition is $2,892,126. The option expires on March 26, 2016. The Nature Conservancy is currently in escrow to purchase the land and is in the process of assigning the option to Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District and transferring the escrow to the Park District.

Since the fee acquisition is only a portion of Waste Management's larger land holdings, a new legal lot is being created. Consultations with the County of Ventura determined that since this is a transfer to a government agency (RSRPD), a very short subdivision process can be utilized and will be completed well in advance of the March option deadline.

Additional expenses of about $60,500 will be required to cover due diligence and closing costs (e.g. appraisal, title reports and insurance, investigations, negotiations, escrow and closing). Therefore, the total projected cost is $2,952,626. A funding chart is shown below.

Costs	EEMP Grant	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy	Wildlife Conservation Board	The Nature Conservancy / RSRPD	TOTAL
Fair Market Value of Property	$550,000	$500,000	$1,842.126		**$2,892,126**
Preliminary Title Reports, Appraisals, Negotiations & Escrow **		$30,000		$10,000	**$40,000**
State approval of appraisal/transaction*				$10,000	**$10,000**
Escrow Fees,Title insurance, closing costs, signage				$10,500	**$10,500**
TOTAL	**$550,000**	**$530,000**	**$1,842,126**	**$30,500**	**$2,952,626**

2) Any preliminary project plans as required;

Since this is a land acquisition project for a natural park, project plans are limited to site access and trail locations. Site access will be from the adjacent County Oak Park which will provide parking, a trail head and a trail leading to and entering Alamos Canyon Park. On November 3, 2015, RSRPD and the County of Ventura executed a joint use agreement to install and maintain these improvements (Agreement for Recreational Use of County of Ventura Oak Park Property with Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District). The attached map identifies the trailhead and access trail locations. Trail planning is not yet complete but preliminary plans are to utilize the existing roads and trails as much as feasible.

In addition to on-site trails, this project is also the subject of a larger regional trail planning process. The trail is sometimes referred to as the "Reagan Trail" because a proposed trail route would pass near the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and have a southerly terminus at Malibu Creek State Park near the site of the former Reagan Ranch. Alamos Canyon would be the northerly terminus of the "Reagan Trail" should it come to fruition.

3) A detailed description of the need and urgency for the grant;

TNC has been working to bring the acquisition to fruition for over a decade. Working the last several years with RSRPD, together we have successfully negotiated an acceptable agreement with Waste Management to acquire the property and, upon approval of this grant application, will have raised sufficient funding to complete the acquisition.

Our option to purchase the property expires in less than five months (March 2016). Waste Management is under no obligation to extend the option period and could put the property on the open market once the option expires.

4) A detailed description of how the project will provide multi-benefit ecosystem, water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and public benefits;

Acquisition of Alamos Canyon will supply a key piece of open space needed to provide a continuous wildlife corridor linkage and public trail between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Santa Monica Mountains. The majority of the properties needed to complete this 25-mile linkage are already owned by public agencies. Alamos Canyon is the largest parcel still needed to connect the trail north of the 118 Freeway to the linkage south of the 118 Freeway.

The linkage when completed is also planned to contain a hiking/riding trail that has become known informally as the Ronald Reagan Trail. This is largely due to the fact that the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is located adjacent to a portion of the proposed trail located in Simi Valley, and that the trail terminates at the former Reagan Ranch in Malibu Creek State Park. Many portions of the trail are already complete and in use. When the full 25-mile linkage and trail is complete, we expect it to consistently draw hikers from Los Angeles and Ventura Counties and beyond.

Alamos Canyon includes approximately 2.0 miles of Alamos Creek and its immediately adjacent watershed. The creek is shown on USGS as an intermittent "blue line" stream. However, a portion of the creek forms a pool adjacent to Highway 118 which typically has perennial surface water or is continuously wet. Perennial wetlands are very rare in this area.

The project will provide water quality benefits. There are currently extensive riparian habitat and wetland plants along Alamos Creek. This wetland provides natural filtration of sediment and other pollutants that may occur in the watershed and prevents them from entering Arroyo Simi.

The project will provide water supply benefits. The water retained in these wetlands percolates into the soil and eventually recharges subsurface aquifers that supplement the local ground water supply. Should this land be developed, the impermeable surfaces would result in increased but short-term peak flows in the creek, reducing the length of time and amount of water on the property, thus reducing ground water recharge. Furthermore, preventing development of this land will reduce the need for additional water supplies.

The wetlands on the property provide rare habitat for wetland and riparian dependent species. These areas will be restored by the current owner per a plan to be approved by the County of Ventura and appropriate permitting agencies. The acquisition of a substantial part of the surround watershed will help ensure the long term sustainability of the restored Alamos Creek.

5) A detailed description of how the project achieves one or more of the purposes of Proposition 1 as stated in Water Code Section 79732(a). The number of the purpose listed in the SMMC prop. 1 grant guidelines is shown in parentheses.

This project will help achieve several purposes of Proposition 1 as listed below.

- (2) The project will implement a watershed adaptation project the will reduce the impacts of climate change on ecosystems. It will accomplish this by preserving an existing stream and a large part of its watershed. Alamos Creek will be restored as part of a separate project. This project will provide a 326-acre buffer to that restoration so as to allow the stream to function naturally into the future. Without this acquisition it is nearly certain that the area immediately adjacent to the creek would be developed with housing and/or commercial buildings.

  Furthermore, Alamos Creek is a tributary to the Arroyo Simi to the south. By protecting Alamos Creek and its watershed, we are also helping to conserve the Arroyo Simi.

- (4) In addition to protecting wetlands, this project will conserve a key link in the wildlife corridor that connects the Sierra Madre range with the Santa Monica Mountains. Conservation of this wildlife linkage is the focus of the Linkage Implementation Alliance (LIA) made up of several agencies and NGO's such as the National Park Service, California State Parks, TNC, local RCDs, Caltrans, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and others. The LIA supports this acquisition.

  Alamos Canyon is the largest of the remaining parcels to be acquired on the west branch of the Sierra Madre Mountains to Santa Monica Mountains connection.

- (9) This acquisition will help protect watershed health and watershed storage capacity, storm water management and greenhouse reduction in several ways. First, conservation of this land will prevent it from being developed for commercial and residential use as has been proposed

in the past and permitted by the existing zoning over much of the property. Maintaining the property as open space will continue to mitigate downstream flooding by holding large quantities of storm water during high flow events. GHG impacts will also result from keeping the land in open space. It is estimated that allowing this land to be developed would result in the release of about 111,000 MT of CO2 over 40 years (see attached CalEEMod calculation report).

- (11) The project will reduce pollution of streams and restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality and flood management. It will do this by maintaining a vegetated buffer to the restored Alamos Creek which will prevent increased sediment loads. Furthermore, this buffer will also act as a natural filter to reduce the likely hood of contaminants reaching the creek.

  Water supply will be maintained by ensuring that water that currently runs in the creek and pools at the south end of the property will continue to do so. This water will then be more likely to percolate to groundwater aquafers that if the land is developed.

  Finally, some of the property is within a FEMA Special Flood Hazard Zone and thus subject to flooding. Allowing the property to continue to accept floodwaters reduces the peak downstream flood flows. Reduced downstream flows means downstream flood damage is lessened. By preserving the floodplain FEMA allows for reduced flood insurance rates to land owners in the watershed.

- (12) Acquisition of Alamos Canyon will assist in the recovery of rare plant and animal species by preserving the habitat they need to survive. Two rare species, Juncus acutus sp. Leopoldii and Spadefoot toad (Spea hammondii) reside on this property and are dependent upon preservation of the wetlands for their survival. Maintaining the creek's natural hydrology as this project will do will help ensure the survival of these species.

6) A detailed description of how the project promotes and implements one or more of the objectives of the California Water Action Plan as stated in Section 1.3 of this guideline;

This acquisition will result in more reliable water supplies by ensuring the continuation of ground water recharge both along Alamos Creek and Arroyo Simi by keeping the creek and its floodplain intact over permeable ground. Without this project the land will likely be developed, resulting in impermeable surfaces that do not allow for infiltration.

Conservation of this land will enhance the creek restoration soon to be implemented by the landowner. It will do so by providing a vast buffer adjacent to the ~55 acre restoration area thus allowing the creek's watershed to function naturally. The result will be permanently protected habitat for the important species that need wetland habitat during some or all of their lifecycle.

This project will result in more resilient and sustainably managed water infrastructure by ensuring that Alamos Creek remains connected to its floodplain. Maintaining this connection will allow the watershed to store a significant volume of water during storm events thus reducing flood damage

downstream and on the Arroyo Simi and Calleguas creeks that it flows to. Maintaining the current flow conditions will also reduce the need for additional flood control infrastructure.

7) A detailed description of how the project helps meet the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions targets, including a quantification of the metric tons of CO2 or CO2e removed or avoided, and an explanation of the methodology used to quantify this figure.

Alamos Canyon is located along an existing freeway (Highway 118) and has long been seen as a prime site for real estate development. In fact a significant portion of the property that will be acquired is zoned for development. The current owner purchased the land from a developer that had submitted plans that would allow nearly 900 new homes and about 4,000,000 sf. of commercial development. Waste Management purchased the land to provide space to expand their existing landfill, but that only occupies a small part of the land they acquired. They have explored selling the remaining land for development and will no doubt follow through with that idea should we fail to purchase it. If that happens the GHG emissions from the property would be substantial.

We have estimated the GHG production that would occur if the property was not protected, but was developed as proposed in the prior plan. Our estimates were purposefully conservative as we assumed only the portion of the planned development directly protected by acquiring the property for conservation would not be developed. In fact it would be very difficult to build any of the proposed development without the land we will acquire.

The estimate was prepared using CalEEMod 2013.2.2 as required by the grant guidelines. The model estimated the project will prevent the production of 110,711 MT of CO2 and a total CO2e reduction of 113,986 MT over 40 years. Note that these calculations are for the operational GHG production and do not include construction related GHG creation. Construction generated GHG can be significant. A summary of the calculation is attached.

8) A detailed description of how the project promotes and implements other relevant regional and state plans and policies.

The County of Ventura has managed growth policies that apply to this area. One of these policies is the Guidelines for Orderly Development (GOD). These guidelines state that development should occur within existing city limits. The SOAR growth management County ordinances also direct development to within existing cities urban boundaries.

A significant portion of the Alamos Canyon property is outside of existing city limits and as such maintaining that area as open space promotes and implements these plans.

9) Indicate whether the project will have matching funds from private, local, or federal sources, and if so, to what extent.

Should this grant be approved we will have full funding to complete the acquisition. Matching funds will come from the state EEMP program, Wildlife Conservation Board, Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District (local) and The Nature Conservancy (private).

10) Indicate whether the project will benefit a disadvantaged community.

This project does not expressly benefit a disadvantaged community. However, it will provide passive recreational opportunities free of charge to all residents of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, and citizens of the City of Simi Valley, County of Ventura, and beyond, including low income and disadvantaged individuals.

11) Indicate whether the project will use the services of local or state conservation corps.

The Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District will use the California Conservation Corps for trail establishment and maintenance, brush clearance, and sign installation.

12) A detailed description of any new or innovative technology or practices that will be applied to the project.

This project is part of a relatively new and innovative program that uses sophisticate modeling to identify important wildlife linkages. Prior to the development of this mapping technology, years, if not decades of tracking animal movement would be needed to identify wildlife linkages. The mapping technology can now model key linkages in a matter of months. Alamos Canyon was identified as key property in the Sierra Madre to Santa Monica Mountains wildlife linkage.

For more information on this technology and to view the Sierra Madre to Santa Monica Mountains linkage please go to http://www.scwildlands.org/

13) A detailed method for monitoring and reporting on the progress and effectiveness of the project during and after project implementation.

Upon the successful close of escrow and acquisition Alamos Canyon, applicable signage will be installed, a trailhead and access trail will be constructed, and the responsibility of trail and open space maintenance will be assumed by Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Grounds Maintenance staff. After close of escrow, a project closeout report will be provided to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. While no further reporting is anticipated at this time, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District is willing to implement monitoring and reporting as required by the Conservancy.